

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1-14 and 19.

Claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being unpatentable Hiraki et al. (U.S. 6,565,966).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hiraki has an effective date of April 14, 2000, which is its U.S. filing date and is antedated by the Japanese priority date of the present application, i.e. Japanese Application Number 2000-33180 which has an effective filing date of February 10, 2000.

The Japanese priority application supports the present claims in all essential respects.

A verified English translation of Applicants' Japanese priority application is enclosed.

Accordingly, the rejection on Hiraki et al. is untenable and should be withdrawn.

The Official Action summary indicates that claim 19 is rejected, however, no reason for rejection is given. Therefore, it is assumed that this claim is allowable or that it is rejected for the same reason as claims 1-14.

In any event, claim 19 is also allowable for the above reasons.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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